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The Malediction in Cuneiform Inscriptions. — By SAMUEL
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A malediction is the praying down of evil upon a person, and implies the desire or threat of evil declared either upon oath or in the most solemn manner. An oath is a solemn declaration made with a reverent appeal to the deity for the truth of what is affirmed; or, when used in law, it is an appeal, in verification of a statement made, to a superior sanction in such a form as exposes the person making the appeal to an indictment for perjury if the statement be false. A promissory oath is a solemn declaration of an intention to abide by a definite promise. There have been found many promissory, as well as direct oaths, in Cuneiform literature. To every oath there is joined either an expressed or an implied threat or malediction. If one swears that a thing is true when it is not he is liable to an indictment for perjury; and if one solemnly makes a promise and breaks it he must suffer the consequences. An oath, then, always carries with it a promise whether expressed or understood; and, in Cuneiform literature, the promise of punishment nearly always took the form of an implied or expressed malediction. The malediction is therefore closely connected with the oath.

Sometimes in earlier, and often in later, Cuneiform inscriptions the promissory oath was replaced by a malediction. When a contract was made or a treaty concluded, a conditional malediction could be pronounced on the offender instead of the oath. Hence, whenever we meet a malediction we are almost always sure that a contract expressed or implied is involved. The case of the special kind of malediction which is called a ban is not an exception to this rule, for it seems certain that a ban is the result of some form of disobedience which involved an implied promissory oath. The oath is, in fact, a malediction

in embryo on offenders, and the malediction belongs to the oath just as punishment does to the breaking of the law. The malediction may in itself be looked upon as the sealing of a sworn contract or agreement.¹ Therefore I shall treat the malediction as a sequel to the oath.² Indeed, it may almost be termed a development of the oath, for, while, as we shall see later, the oath and malediction existed side by side in Cuneiform literature, yet, as time went on, the malediction became far more prominent than the oath, even in those contracts where an oath would be expected.

Nothing proves the close relation between the malediction and the oath more thoroughly than the use of the two words *mamîtu* and *niš*.

The word *mamîtu* comes from *yama'* which means primarily that which is pronounced, *e. g.* oath, malediction, ban. It has been shown in *The Oath in Babylonian and Assyrian Literature* that *mamîtu* means "oath". Now, since an oath, in its essence, is a call upon the deity to punish the perjurer, it is, therefore, a conditional malediction, for if the oath is broken the deity will punish. Further, as we have already remarked, this conditional malediction often takes the place of the oath. It should be also noticed that *nam-erim*, the Sumerian equivalent of *mamîtu*, originally meant "hostile destiny" (*nam* = *šimtu* = destiny; *erim* = hostile). Moreover, the idiograms *dug* and *da* which are often found in connection with *sag-ba* in oath formulae are equivalent to *arâru*, *tamû*, and mean, "condemn", "curse", "utter words of a curse".³

In an oath, *mamîtu* acted as a taboo, making the covenant a sacred one, just as holiness did in Hebrew ritual. It thus became a concrete curse to those who swore wrongfully or broke their oath, because an oath was taken "under pain of the malediction (*mamit*)"⁴ of the divine beings invoked. Poet-

¹ Compare *Neh.* 5, 12-13.


² See Mercer, *The Oath in Babylonian and Assyrian Literature*; also *The Oath in Sumerian Inscriptions* (JAOS XXXIII, Pt. 1) and *The Oath in Babylonian Inscriptions of the time of the Hammurabi dynasty* (AJSL XXIX, 2).

³ Compare the Hebrew אלה which means both *oath* and *curse*. Compare also, as analogy, the Arabic *وَامِئَة* misfortune, which is a derivation of *وَمَاتَ* which, in turn, is connected with *mamîtu*.

⁴ I R. 13 Col. V 12-16 (Tiglath-Pileser I).

ically, we also find the word *mamîtu* translated "malediction" or "curse" in the sense of an active pestilence or evil, *e. g.* *ilu Nâru . . . mamit ina maḥ-ri-šu ri-gim-ša kîma a-li-e*, "the god Nâru . . . the curse is before him, his (the curse's) cry is like that of a demon (*alû*).¹ Used in this poetical way the malediction was perhaps personified, for we read in a Semitic Šamaš-hymn: *ilu Šamaš aš-šum ma-mit ša ul-tu ûme ma-'a-du-ti arki-ia rak-su-ma lâ paṭâru ši-i-ta ḥul-ku u lâ tâb šêri iṣ-šak-na*, "O Šamaš when the curse for many days is bound behind me and there is no deliverer, expulsion of the evil and of the sickness of the flesh is brought about (by thee)".² In another place we read that the "curse (it is) which falls upon a man like a demon".³ *Mamîtu* was also the "state of uncleanness and sin, from which the sick man was to be freed",⁴ for a malediction always afflicted its victim with uncleanness and sin.

Besides meaning oath *niš* also means malediction, *e. g.* *ni-iš šamaš u-ša-az-ki-ru-šu*, "they let him pronounce the curse of Šamaš".⁵ It should be noticed, however, in addition to what I have said on the word *niš* in my *Oath in Babylonian and Assyrian Literature* that the word was used as a particle. In later inscriptions the preposition *ina* often took its place. The particle *niš*, therefore, may be rendered "by"—but only in connection with a word to swear in oath or to curse in malediction. The Sumerian *Zi = niš* = "in the name of" (as a particle) in connection with words which express the pronouncement of an oath or malediction. *Niš*, like *mamîtu*, was perhaps personified and meant the evil spirit (*ni-iš* = Sumerian

Zi, , evil spirit) or demon who bans one, *e. g.* *li-in-ni-is-si ma-mit li-ta-rid ni-šu*, may the Ban be sent away, may the curse be driven out".⁶ It also, like *mamîtu*, came to mean the sinful state resulting from the demon's attack.

¹ IV R. 14, No. 2, obv. l. 23-25 (Interlinear Bilingual Fragments).

² The text is in Bezold's *Catalogue* p. 1436; and also in Gray, *The Šamaš Religious Texts*, pl. IV. Compare Del. *HWB* p. 565.

³ IV R. 7, Col. I, l. 1 (Tablet, partly bilingual).

⁴ Morgenstern, *Doctrine of Sin*, p. 42.

⁵ Muss-Arnolt, *Dict.* p. 278.

⁶ Del. *HWB* p. 303a, 470b, 482d.

That the malediction and the oath are closely related a comparison of the two formulae found in contracts of the time of Sumu-la-ēl will show. They are Kohler und Ungnad, *Ham-murabi's Gesetz* Nos. 26 and 36. In KU 26 the formula reads: *niš ilu Šamaš ilu Marduk u Sumu-la-ilu ša avât duppim annim unakaru*. In KU 36 it reads: *limun ilu Šamaš ilu Marduk u Sumu-la-ilum ša avât duppim anim unakaru*. In both cases the preferable rendering is: "curse of Šamaš etc. upon him who changes the contents of this tablet". A possible rendering is: "by Šamaš etc. (they swore) that they would (not) change the contents of this tablet". In any case *limun* is synonymous with *niš*, and the relationship between malediction and oath is established.

It is evident from the above that the malediction and the oath served the same purpose and were, therefore, interchangeable. Both attempted to secure the preservation of an agreement or contract under penalty of punishment and curse.

I. Maledictions found in Cuneiform Inscriptions.

There are in Cuneiform inscriptions three classes of literature: poetical, historical, and legal and commercial. For convenience sake, we shall refer to the last class as "contracts", to which also belong the codified laws of Hammurabi. While the many references to maledictions in poetical literature are valuable for a general discussion of the nature and ritual of the malediction, it is not possible on account of the very nature of poetical usage to treat them as examples of actually pronounced maledictions. Such references, then, will not be tabulated in the present study, but will be used in the general discussions. The same is true of the maledictions which occur in letters. It is different with the other two classes of literature. All the expressed maledictions found in them will be tabulated and studied with a view to throwing light upon the custom of pronouncing maledictions in the different periods of the life of those peoples represented by Cuneiform inscriptions.

1. Sumerian Period.

1. *Contracts*. The paucity of Sumerian contract literature is probably the reason that no expressed oath formula has been found before the dynasty of Ur 2295 B. C. During that

dynasty the oath formula was common. The malediction, however, is found, as we shall learn from an historical inscription of the time of Eannatum king of Lagash c. 2900 B. C., previous to the dynasty of Ur. There is evidence that the malediction was used also in contracts during the same period, *e. g.* in the reign of *patesi* Entemena of Lagaš c. 2850 B. C., for in a contract published by S. Langdon in ZA xxv, 1-2, Sprechsaal, "Some Sumerian Contracts", pp. 205 ff., No. 4 (RTC 16), the expression *ud an-dū dug-gāl-an ud-da dūg-dūg-na nig-erim ba gá-gá giš kaka dūg-dūg-na-sū gaz* may be rendered: "when in future days complaint is made, provided that by the complaint evil is done, may such a one be slain by the sword for his words". At any rate, a very old tablet now in the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, published by G. A. Barton in *The Museum Journal*, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 4 ff., contains a contract in which the phrase SA-NE GIN, "their curse he established" certainly teaches us that in the earliest Sumerian periods (the contract is not dated, but because of its archaic script Barton places it among the very oldest of extant Sumerian inscriptions) the idea of malediction was known, and as we saw from the preceding example, was probably expressed formally. As far as our records go, therefore, the malediction is found at an earlier period than the oath. Further, evidence is not lacking to show that both were intimately connected in early as well as in late Cuneiform inscriptions. As was shown above, both the malediction and the oath served the same purpose. And this is seen in very early contracts, *e. g.* in a contract published by S. Langdon in ZA xxv, 1-2, Sprechsaal, pp. 205 ff., No. 1 B 6, which is dated in the reign of Gimil-Sin, king of Ur, 2209-2203 B. C., the expression *mu lugal-bi in-pad galu galu nu gi-gi-da*, "by the king the oath was taken—man shall not bring suit against man", there is a prohibition which amounts to an implied conditional malediction.

As it is not the object of this paper to collect implied maledictions, this example will suffice. The fact that there are very few extant examples of maledictions in Sumerian contracts is due to the paucity of materials recovered.

2. *Historical Inscriptions.* Whenever an inscription was set up it was usual to invoke the curse of different gods on anyone who in anyway would sin against its purpose and intention.

These inscriptions related to treaties, building contracts, and agreements about other public works. Besides enumerating the deeds and qualities of the king who caused their publication, these contracts contain maledictions invoking a curse on anyone who may in future mutilate or destroy them. In almost the whole range of Cuneiform literature such maledictions are plentiful. It is also interesting to note in this connection that from the earliest time till the New Babylonian dynasty, when the malediction seems to disappear, blessings often occur in the same inscription side by side with the malediction, and, in later times, even took its place.

In the treaty of E-an-na-tum, king of Lagaš (c. 2900 B. C., Thureau-Dangin, SAK pp. 10 ff.), which he made with the people of Gišhu we find, together with the oath, a conditional malediction pronounced against any inhabitant of Gišhu who may in the future alter the words of the treaty. In the oath, the king invokes the *šuš-gal* ("net") of Enlil (Bel), of the goddess Ninḥarsag, of Enki (Ea), of Enzu (Sin), of Babbar (Šamaš), and of Ninkī, and the *šuš-gal* of the same deities will slay the person who in any way impairs the treaty. The malediction was conditional, but very definite. Over and over it is said: *ud-da inim-ba šu-ni-bal-e sa šuš-gal (dingir) en-lil-lá nam-e-na-ta-tar giš-HU ki an-ta he-šuš*, "whoever in the future changes this word, may the great *šuš-gal* of (such and such a deity), by which they have sworn, slay *Giš-HU*". Here six deities are invoked to curse; but, if we admit that in the oath by Enlil his son Ningirsu is included, then the number of the deities invoked in the oath would be seven, the holy number of swearing, and consequently the number in the malediction-formula would also be seven.

The next malediction in chronological order is found in the reign of Šar-Gani-Šarri c. 2650 B. C. It is inscribed on a door socket (SAK 162—163), and reads: *ša duppam sù-a u-sa-za-ku-ni ilu Bêl ù ilu Šamaš ù ilu Innina išdê-su li-zu-hu ù zêra-su li-il-gu-tu*, "whoever changes this inscription, may Bêl, Šamaš, and Innina (Ištar) remove his foundation and exterminate his seed". A second door socket (SAK 164-165) has the malediction: *ša duppam sù-a u-sa-za-ku-ni ilu bêl ù ilu Šamaš išdê-su li-zu-ḥa ù zêra-su li-il-gu-da*, "whoever changes this inscription, may Bêl and Šamaš remove his foundation and exterminate his seed".

Two maledictions represent the reign of Naram-Sin, the successor of Šar-Gani-Šarri. The first is found on a small stela (SAK pp. 166-167, Stela A) and reads: *ša duppam šù-a u-sa-za-ku-ni ilu Innina (broken here) li-zu-ḫu ù zēra-su li-il-gu-tu*, "whoever changes this inscription may Innina (Ištar) — — — — remove — — — — and exterminate his seed. The second is on a statue of the king found at Susa (SAK 166f.), the malediction reads: *ša duppam šù-a u-sa-za-ku-ni (broken here) ù ilu a-ga-dé ki išdē-su li-zu-ḫa ù zēra-su li-il-gu-da*, "whoever changes this inscription may — — — — of Akkad remove his foundation and exterminate his seed".

From the reign of Gudea *patesi* of Lagaš c. 2450 B. C. there are many inscriptions. Among them none is better known than Statue B (SAK pp. 66ff.). In cols. 8 and 9 is found a conditional malediction invoked to operate against all or anyone who may in the future disturb in any way the statue which the king has set up. The formula is a very long one. The first deities invoked are Anu, Enlil, Ninḫarsag, Enki. The following are invoked to curse in specific ways: Enzu, Ningirsu, Ninā, Nin-dar-a, Ga-tum-dug, Bau Innina, Babbar, Pa-sag, Gal-alim, DUN-šag-ga-na, Ninmarki, Dumuziabzu, Ningišzida. The malediction is to be manifold, but does not contain the stereotyped formula *išdē-su li-zu-ḫa ù zēra-su li-il-gu-da*. A similar though shorter formula is found inscribed on Statue C (SAK pp. 74ff.) of the same ruler. Only the goddess Innina (Ištar) is invoked. The malediction formula of this inscription contains for the first time the technical word for curse, namely, *nam-tar* in the phrase *nam-ḫe-ma-tar-e*. In the inscription on Statue E (SAK pp. 78ff.) col. 9, there is a phrase which implies a threat and seems to take the place of the malediction. It is *alan galu é-dingir ba-ú mu-dū-a-kam ki-gub-ba-bi galu nu-zig-zig sá-dug-bi galu la-ba-ni-lal-e*, "the statue of the builder of the temple of Bau, its foundation may no one remove, may no one restrict its offering". There is a similar inscription on Statue K (SAK pp. 86ff.) where deities are invoked. They are: Ningirsu, Bau, Galalim, DUN-šag-ga-na.

An inscription (SAK pp. 170ff.), belonging to the reign of Lasirab, king of Gutiu, who reigned near about the period of the dynasty of Akkad, contains the usual malediction. The deities invoked are: the gods of Gutiu, Innina, and Sin.

The stela of Seripul (SAK pp. 172-173) teaches us that

Anu-bânini, king of Lulubu, previous to the dynasty of Ur, erected a monument to himself and to his goddess Innina in the mountain, and thereon he inscribed a conditional malediction on all who might in the future change the text. He invokes Anu and Antu, Bêl and Bêlit, Immer and Innina, Sin and Šamaš (and others whose names are broken off). The text contains the interesting formula: *ir-ra-dam li-mu-dam li-ru-ru-uš*, "with an evil curse may they curse him".

The stela of Sheichan (SAK pp. 172-173) belongs to about the same period as the above. Though poorly preserved it contains a malediction in which the deities Šamaš and Immer are invoked.

There are several inscriptions belonging to rulers of Susa (SAK pp. 176 ff.), contemporaneous with the dynasty of Ur, which contain maledictions. BA-ŠA-šušinak patesi of Susa erected an alabaster statue and inscribed upon it a malediction on all who might in future change the text. The gods invoked are Šušinak, Šamaš, Nariti, Nergal, and one whose name is broken off. Another inscription from the same reign invokes, in the malediction, Šušinak, Innina, Narite, and Nergal; and still another invokes Šušinak and Šamaš, Bêl and Enki, Innina and Sin, Ninḥarsag and Nati, all the gods. At about the same time we find an inscribed basin from the reign of a certain Idadu-Šušinak which he made for the temple of his god Šušinak. The deities invoked in the malediction are Šušinak, Šamaš, Iṣtar, and Sin. They are asked to curse the offender "with an evil curse" (*ar-ra-ta li-mu-dam li-ru-ru-šu*).

In contracts of the Sumerian period there is sufficient evidence to show that maledictions were pronounced, but, as far as we can judge, no stereotyped formula was used and no specific gods were invoked, neither was the name of the king invoked, contrary to the practice in the oath formula. It will be remembered also that no specific god was invoked in the oaths of contracts of this period.

The earliest historical inscription which contains a malediction belongs to the dynasty of Ur. From that time on maledictions are quite frequently found, and a formula which may be considered more or less stereotyped occurs often. It is *išdê-su li-zu-ḥu ù zêra-šu li-il-gu-tu*, "may (the gods, who are mentioned) remove his foundation and exterminate his seed".

The deities invoked in maledictions in historical inscriptions of the Sumerian period, in order of occurrence are:

Enlil (Bêl), Ninḥarsag, Enki (Ea), Enzu (Sin), Babbar (Šamaš), Ninki (Ištar?), Ningirsu(?).

Bêl, Šamaš, Innina (Ištar).

Bêl, Šamaš.

Innina (Ištar).

Anu, Enlil, Ninḥarsag, Enki, Enzu, Ningirsu, Ninâ (Eš-ḥanna), Nindara, Ga-tum-dug (daughter of Anu), Bau, Innina, Babbar, Pasag, Galalim (son of Ningirsu), DUN-šag-ga-na (son of Ningirsu), Ninmarki (dgt. of Eš-ḥanna), Dumu-zi-abzu, Nin-giš-zi-da (the patron god of Gudea).

Innina.

Ningirsu, Bau, Galalim, DUN-šag-ga-ra.

Innina, Sin.

Anu and Antu, Bêl and Bêlit, Immer and Innina, Sin and Šamaš.

Šamaš, Immer.

Šušinak (lord of Elam), Šamaš, Narudi, Nergal.

Šušinak, Innina, Narudi, Nergal.

Šušinak, Šamaš, Bêl, Enki, Innina, Sin, Ninḥarsag, Nati.

Šušinak, Šamaš, Ištar, Sin.

It will be noticed that the deities most frequently invoked in these maledictions are Šamaš, Ištar, and Bêl, and Šušinak in Elam. The above maledictions represent inscriptions from Akkad, Lagaš, Gutiu, Luluba, Susa, and one unknown place.

2. Period of the First Babylonian Dynasty.

1. *Contracts.* It is not till we reach the First Babylonian dynasty that we find the malediction sometimes definitely taking the place of the oath. Of course this might have been a common practice long before this dynasty, but as far as our sources go the first examples are found in contracts of the reign of Sumu-la-ēl c. 2218 B. C. KU 26 contains absolute proof (see above p. 285 f.) that in KU 36 we have a malediction as substitute for an oath. There *limun* takes the place of *niš*. From the same reign, namely, Sumu-la-ēl (for Sumu-ēl as merely a variant of Sumu-la-ēl, see Daiches, *Altbabylonische Rechtsurkunden*, pp. 16-17), we have another example. This contract, KU 453, records the presentation of a temple by

Nur-ilišu who promises not to make trouble about the priestly office of the temple. Whoever does so is to be cursed. The formula is: *li-mu-un ilu Šamaš u Su-mu-ilum ša i-ra-ga-mu*, "an enemy of Šamaš and Sumu-ēl is he who complains". There were seven witnesses to the contract. KU 371 is a sale contract and belongs to the reign of Ilumma-Ila, a prince contemporaneous with Sumu-la-ēl. Instead of the usual oath, the malediction formula occurs. It reads: *li-mu-un ilu Šamaš u An-ma-ni-la ša a-na a-va-ti-šu i-tu-ru*, "an enemy of Šamaš and Iluma-Ila (see Daiches, *op. cit.*, pp. 33 ff., for a discussion of this name) is he who contests the agreement". The only other malediction formula found in contracts of the Hammurabi dynasty appears in KU 478, a contract about the presentation of a piece of land. It belongs to the reign of Ammi-šaduga c. 1984 B. C. Here again the malediction takes the place of the oath. The phrase is: *ha-at-tu ša Ku-uk-ka- nap na-še-ir i-na mu-uh-hi-šu li-iš-ša-ki-in*, "may the fear of Kukka-našir (the Elamite king) be upon him" (compare the "fear of Isaac", Gen. 31 42).

2. *Historical Inscriptions.* The only inscription of the First Babylonian dynasty, which may be said to belong to this class, and which contains a malediction, is the famous stela of the Hammurabi Code. In the Epilogue (Harper, *The Code of Hammurabi*, pp. 99 ff.) Hammurabi says: "if that man do not pay attention to my words which I have written upon my monument; if he forget my curse (*ir-ri-ti-ia*) and do not fear the curse of the god (*ir-ri-it ili*) — — — as for that man — — — whoever he may be, may the great god — — — curse (*li-ru-ur*) his fate". He then goes on to enumerate the various gods upon whom he calls to pronounce a malediction upon such as may in any way interfere with the stela. He carefully describes the attributes and activities of each deity invoked. The deities are: Bēl, Bēlit, Ea, Šamaš (the blighting curse of Šamaš is referred to), Sin, Adad, Zamalmal, Ištar, Nergal, Nintu, Ninkarrāk, and, finally, the great gods of heaven and earth, and the Anunnaki. They are asked to curse with blighting curses. At the end Bēl is again invoked.

The deities invoked in contracts of the First Babylonian dynasty in order of occurrence are:

Šamaš, Marduk, and the king (named).

Šamaš and the king (named). This occurs twice.

Kukka-našir (the Elamite king).

There is evident a stereotyped malediction formula in these contracts. It is: *limun* — — — — *ša*, "curse of — — — upon him who". Notice that Šamaš is the favourite god, and that the king is also often invoked (compare the usage in oath formulae of the same period, AJSL XXIX, 2).

For the deities invoked in the Hammurabi inscription, the only text of that kind with a malediction, in this period, see above.

3. From the Second to the Ninth Babylonian Dynasty.

1. *Contracts.* The Second Babylonian or Kassite dynasty is represented by a property contract from the time of Adad-šumiddin c. 1240 B. C. (KB III¹ pp. 162-163). The deities invoked are: Anu, Bêl, Ea, Sin, Šamaš, Rammân, Marduk, Nindimsu, Bakad, Papu, Uraš, Bêlit-ekalli, Šukamuna, Šumalia, Nannar, and as many gods as are mentioned on the stela. The next contract containing a malediction and which belongs to this period represents the reign of Marduk-nadin-aḫi c. 1140 B. C. (KB IV, pp. 70 ff.). Whoever in any one of many detailed ways disputes the conclusions of the contract will be subject to the curse of the gods. The formula is: *ilâni ma-la i-na muḫ-ḫi na-ri-i an-ni-i ma-la šu-un-šu-nu za-ak-ru ar-rat la nap-šu-ri li-ru-ru-šu*, "the gods as many as are named on the stela shall curse him with an indissoluble malediction". The phrase *ar-rat la nap-šu-ri li-ru-ru-šu* occurs often as a particularly powerful malediction formula. The invoked deities are named in detail. They are: Anu, Bêl, Ea, Marduk, Nabû, Rammân, Sin, Šamaš, Ištar, Gula (wife of Ninib), Ninib, Nergal, Zamalmal, Papsukal, Eš-ḫanna, the great god (*ilu rabû*), the great lord (*belu rabû*), and the gods as many as are mentioned on the stela. The characteristic of each deity is mentioned, and each is invoked to curse the offender in some specific way. Then the same formula as above is repeated. A similar (though not quite as elaborate) malediction is found in another contract of the same reign (KB IV, pp. 76 ff.). The formula is a particularly powerful one. It is: *ar-rat la nap-šu-ri maru-uš-ta li-ru-ru-šu*, "may they curse him with an indissoluble, evil curse". The deities invoked are: Anu, Bêl, Ea, Ninmarki, Sin, Šamaš, Ištar, Marduk, Ninib, Gula, Rammân, Nabû, and all the gods as many as are named on the stela. Again each

deity is asked to curse the offender in some specific way. A third malediction is found in another contract of this reign (KB IV, pp. 78ff.). The formula is the same as the last named. The deities are: Anu, Bêl, Ea, Ninmarki, Marduk, Šamaš, Sin, Ištar, Ninib, Gula, Rammân, Nabû, and the great gods as many as are named on the stela. The next belongs to the reign of Marduk-apli-iddi-na I c. 1129 B. C. (Scheil, *Dél. en Perse*, VI, pp. 31ff.). This is a *kudurru* containing a semi-historical inscription, though clearly a contract, in which many deities are invoked to curse. They are Anu, Bêl, Ea, Nin-harsag, Sin, Ningal, Šamaš, Aia, Bunêê, MAÛ, Šeru, Kittu, Mešaru, Marduk, Zarpanitum, Nabû, Tašmetum, Ninib, Nin Karrak, Zamalmal, Bau, Damu, Geštinnam, Ištar, Nanâ, Anun-nitum, Adad, Šala, Mišarru, Nêrrugal, Laz, Išum, Šubula, Lugalgirra, Šitlamtaê, Lugalgišatugabliš, Ma'metum, Lil, Ninbat, Tispak, Kadi, Nusku, Sadarnunna, Ip, Ninegal, Šukamuna, Šumalia, all those who are named on the inscription. The same indissoluble malediction is pronounced, *e. g. ar-ra-at la nap-šu-ri-im*. The old stereotyped phrase is used here although partly broken off, namely, *išdê-su li-iz-zu-ĥu zêra-su li-il-gu-dum*. A fragmentary *kudurru* from the same time (Scheil, *op. cit.*, pp. 39ff.) contains the remnant of an indissoluble malediction. The deities are: Šamaš, Nannar, Adad, Marduk, Gulu, Nusku, Ninegal, Šukamuna, Šumalia.

The Sixth Babylonian dynasty is represented by a contract from the reign of Ninib-Kudurušur c. 1020 B. C. (KB IV, pp. 82ff.) which contains a malediction. Though not well preserved in the part where the malediction comes, there is sufficient to show that the conditional malediction was pronounced upon anyone who would in anyway violate the contract. It seemed to be a regular practice in such land contracts as this to record the malediction as soon as the agreement was sealed. This is directly expressed in the present contract as we learn from the phrase: *ekli ik-nu-kam-ma ar-ra-ta i-ru-ur-ma*, "he sealed the field and pronounced the malediction". The deities invoked are: Anu, Ea, Zarpanitum, Nabû, Šamaš, Nergal, Zamalmal, Ninib, Gula, and others whose names have been broken off. The same stereotyped malediction formula occurs: *ar-rat la nap-šu-ri ma-ru-uš-ta ti-ru-ru-šu*. Of uncertain date is an inscription in New Babylonian script but which probably belongs to this general period. It contains a pre-

sentation contract and the malediction is pronounced in the name of Marduk and Nabû (KB IV, pp. 98-99).

The Ninth Babylonian dynasty c. 753 B. C. (KB IV, pp. 158ff.) is represented by a contract which contains two maledictions. It is a sale contract. Whoever in future contests the argreement, may Anu, Bêl, Ea, curse him with a wicked indissoluble malediction. The usual formula appears, namely, *ar-rat la nap-sur maruštum li-ru-ru-šu*. The contract is sealed and dated in the reign of Sargon of Assyria. In the second malediction, or the second record of the same malediction, the same gods are invoked, namely, Anu, Bêl, and Ea, and the same formula is used.

Many contracts of this period contain no directly expressed malediction but are sealed and signed—an indication that either an oath or a malediction was understood. It is worthy of note how completely the malediction has usurped the place of the oath in these contracts.

2. *Historical Inscriptions.* The first historical inscription of this period which contains a malediction belongs to the reign of Nebuchadrezzar I c. 1140 B. C. (KB III¹ pp. 168ff.). Whoever in any way defaces the inscription of the king is to be cursed by all the gods named therein. The deities are then named and their attributes noted. They are: Ninib, Gula, Rammân, Šumalia, Nergal, Nanâ, the gods of Namar, Sin, the lady of Akkad, the gods of Bit-Habban. The next belongs to the reign of Nabû-abal-iddin c. 888 B. C. (TSBA VIII, pp. 164ff.). The deities invoked are: Šamaš, Malik, and Bunêê. The stereotyped formulae of earlier maledictions do not appear in these two inscriptions. The reign of Marduk-apli-iddi-na II c. 721 B. C. furnishes us with the next malediction. At the end of a long inscription (KB III¹ pp. 184ff.) it is declared that whoever in future, whether prince or subject, in any way defaces the inscription would be cursed with an indissoluble curse (*arrat la nap-šu-ru*) by Anu, Ea, Bêl, Marduk, Erua, and the great gods. Another malediction is found on an inscription of the reign of Šamaš-šum-ukîn c. 668 B. C. (KB III¹ pp. 194ff.). Only one god is invoked, namely, Nabû.

The deities invoked in the contracts of the Second to the Ninth Babylonian dynasty are:

Anu, Bêl, Ea, Sin, Šamaš, Rammân, Marduk, Nindimsu, Bakad, Papu, Uraš, Belit-ekalli, Šukamuna, Šumalia, Nannar.

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Anu, Bêl, Ea, Marduk, Nabû, Rammân, Sin, Šamaš, Ištar, Gula, Ninib, Nergal, Zamalmal, Papsukal, Eš-ḥanna.

Anu, Bêl, Ea, Ninmarki, Sin, Šamaš, Ištar, Marduk, Ninib, Gula, Rammân, Nabû.

Anu, Bêl, Ea, Ninmarki, Marduk, Šamaš, Sin, Ištar, Ninib, Gula, Rammân, Nabû.

Anu, Bêl, Ea, Ninḥarsag, Sin, Ningal, Šamaš, Aia, Bunênê, MAḤ, Šeru, Kittu, Mešaru, Marduk, Zarpanitum, Nabû, Tašmetum, Ninib, Nin Karrak, Zamalmal, Bau, Damu, Geštinna, Ištar, Nana, Anunnitum, Adad, Šala, Mišarru, Nêrrugal, Laz, Išum, Šubula, Lugalgirra, Sitlamtaê, Lugalgišatugabliš, Ma'metum, Lil, Ninbat, Tispak, Kadi, Nusku, Sadarnunna, Ip, Ninegal, Šukamuna, Šumalia.

Šamaš, Nannar, Adad, Marduk, Gula, Nusku, Ninegal, Šukamuna, Šumalia.

Anu, Ea, Zarpanitum, Nabû, Šamaš, Nergal, Zamalmal, Ninib, Gula (rest broken off).

Marduk, Nabû.

Anu, Bêl, Ea.

The deities invoked in the historical inscriptions of the Second to the Ninth dynasty are:

Ninib, Gula, Rammân, Šumalia, Nergal, Nanâ, the gods of Namer, Sin, the lady of Akkad, the gods of Bit-Ḥabban. Šamaš, Malik (MUḤ?), Bunênê.

Anu, Ea, Bêl, Marduk, Erûa.

Nabû.

The favourite deities invoked in maledictions in contracts during this period are: Anu, Ea, Marduk, Bêl, Šamaš, Nabû. No deity is found to occur more than once in maledictions in the historical inscriptions of this period. However, the number of such texts is too small to warrant any conclusions.

4. Assyrian Period.

1. Contracts.

(1) *Royal Contracts.* In the reign of Adad-nirari IV c. 810 B. C. a royal contract (Kohler und Ungnad, *Assyrische Rechtsurkunden*, No. 1) contains an oath and the following expression: *rubû arkû pi-i dan-ni-te šú-a-tu la ú-šam-sak*, "a later prince shall not change the contents of this contract". Although no direct malediction is here expressed, the phrase may be considered an equivalent. The oath is taken in reference, as it

seems, to the preservation of the contents of the contract, and contains within itself the idea of a malediction, which is evident in the above quoted phrase. The same is true of KUA 4 of the same reign; KUA 8 (reign of Tiglathpileser III); and KUA 9 (c. 730 B. C.), all of which contain an oath and the same stereotyped expression as was found in KUA 1. KUA 10 (reign of Sargon c. 722) contains no malediction, but the following phrase occurs: *aš-šu sat-tak-ki ilu A-šur la ba-da-a-li ù zi-kir šarri maḥ-ri-e la šú-un-ni-i kunuk šarri ab-run-ma ad-din-šú-nu-ti*, "in order that the tribute to Ašur may not come into disuse, and the notice of the former king may experience no change, I imprinted my royal seal and gave it to them". Here the sealing seems to take the place of the malediction.

KUA 15 (reign of Ašurbanipal c. 668) is an interesting contract. Whoever sins against the contract will incur the displeasure not only of the gods but also of the king. The stereotyped formula reads: *ú-lu-u šarru ú-lu-u rubû šâ pi-i dan-ni-ti šu-a-tu ú-ša-an-nu-ú ni-iš ilu Ašur ilu Adad ilu Be-ir ilu En-lil Aš-šur ki ú ilu Ištar Aš-šur ki-i-tun*, "whoever changes the contents of this contract, whether king or prince, may Ašur etc. curse him". The word *niš* here can be translated by nothing else but "curse". The content requires it. The same formula is found in KUA 16 (reign of Ašurbanipal) and the deities Ašur, Adad, Ber, Enlil of Assyria, and Ištar of Assyria are invoked. KUA 18, of the same reign, is fragmentary in the place where we should expect the malediction, and was probably the same as KUA 16. KUA 19, the date of which is uncertain, probably contained a similar malediction to the above. There is sufficient evidence to show that the king was invoked in the malediction.

KUA 20 (reign of Ašur-etel-ilâni c. 626) is very fragmentary where the malediction ought to come. A portion, however, is preserved, showing that deities were invoked. The introductory *ni-iš* is also preserved. The usual cause of the malediction is stated. KUA 21 of the same reign is another fragment. KUA 23 (undated) contains a command instead of a malediction. It is: "O future prince, change not the contents of this contract".

(2) *Dedication of a Temple.* KUA 44 (time of Ašurbanipal). A temple is dedicated to Ninib. Whoever deprives Ninib of the property will be cursed by Ninib, a goddess (broken off),

Adad, Nabû, Ištar, Ašur, Gula. The old *ar-rat la napšuri* is invoked.

(3) *Inheritance.* KUA 46 (uncertain date) is an inheritance contract. Whoever disturbs it will be cursed by Bêl and Nabû. KUA 47 (undated) is a similar contract. A piece of land in Nineveh near the temple of Šamaš is presented by a man to his daughter. Whoever in future disputes the contract will be cursed by Ašur, Sin, Šamaš, Bêl, Nabû.

(4) *Exchange.* KUA 632 (c. 600 B. C.) is a slave exchange. Whoever contests the transaction must pay a certain amount of money. This punishment takes the place of the malediction. The judges in the decision are the deities Ašur, Šamaš, Bêl, and Nabû.

2. Historical Inscriptions.

The first Assyrian historical inscription which contains a malediction belongs to the reign of Pudi-ilu c. 1350 B. C. (Budge and King, *The Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, p. 3). The king declares that whoever shall blot out his name or alter his inscription may Šamaš overthrow his kingdom and send famine upon the land. The next is an inscription of the reign of Adad-Nirari I c. 1325 (B. & K., pp. 9-12) recording the king's conquests and his restoration of the temple of Anu. He declares that whosoever shall blot out his name and inscribe his own in its place or shall in any other of many enumerated ways deface or injure the inscription will be cursed. The deities invoked are: Ašur, Anu, Bêl, Ea, Ištar, all the great gods, the Igigi (the spirits) of heaven, and the Anunnaki (spirits) of earth. The evil curse (*ir-ri-ta ma-ru-uš-ta*) is invoked. In the Annals of Tukulti-Ninib I c. 1275 B. C. (L. W. King, *Records of the Reign of Tukulti-Ninib I*, pp. 92-95) a malediction similar to the above is recorded. The one god invoked is Ašur. Upon a clay tablet of the time of Sennacherib is a copy of a seal inscription of the reign of Tukulti-Ninib I (B. & K., pp. 14ff.). The inscription contains a malediction in which the gods Ašur and Adad are invoked. The same malediction is repeated. Building inscriptions of the time of Ašur-reš-iši c. 1140 B. C. (B. & K., pp. 17ff.) contain two maledictions in one of which Ištar is invoked and in the other the gods.

Tiglath-pileser I c. 1100 B. C. in his great Cylinder inscription (B. & K., pp. 27ff.) appeals to the gods Anu and Adad to curse with an evil malediction (*ar-ra-ta ma-ru-uš-ta li-ru-ru-uš*) all

who may in any way violate his inscriptions. Ašur-bêl-kala c. 1080 B. C. has left an inscription on the back of a female statue (B. & K., pp. 152ff.) in which a malediction is pronounced invoking the gods of Martu and a god whose name has not been completely preserved. What is left is *Za*.

The annals of Tukulti-Ninib II c. 889 B. C. (Scheil, *Annales de Tukulti Ninip* II, rev. ll. 63-64) contains a malediction in which the name of Ašur, and Adad are invoked. Ašur-našir-pal c. 884 (B. & K., pp. 155ff.) invokes a malediction in the name of Ašur, Adad, and Ura; another in the name of Ištar (B. & K. 172); a third in the name of Ašur and Ninib (B. & K. 188); and a fourth in the name of Ašur, Anu, Bêl, and Ea (B. & K. 252ff.). Sargon c. 722 (KB II, pp. 50-51) invokes Ašur, Šamaš, Rammân, and the gods; Sennacherib (KB II 112-113) invokes Ašur; and Ašurbanipal (KB II 237ff.) invokes Ašur, Sin, Šamaš, Rammân, Bêl, Nabû, Ištar of Nineveh, Ištar of Arbela, Ninib, Nergal, and Nuska in one inscription, and Marduk alone in another. In the latter Marduk is invoked because the malediction occurs in an inscription which has to do with the installation of a Babylonian king. To an inscription of the reign of Agum I or Agum-Kakrîmi c. 1734 B. C. (KB III¹ pp. 152-153), one of the Kassite kings, there is appended a note of Ašurbanipal invoking a malediction upon anyone who might remove his name (the name of Ašurbanipal) from the stela. The deities Ašur and Bêlit are invoked. The very last king of Assyria, namely, Sin-šar-iškun c. 616-606 invoked the gods to curse (*li-ru-ru-uš*) the future violator.

The deities invoked in contracts of the Assyrian period are:

The king and Ašur, Adad, Ber, Assyrian Enlil, Assyrian Ištar.

Ašur, Adad, Ber, Assyrian Enlil, Assyrian Ištar.

The king.

The great gods.

Ninib, a goddess (name lost), Adad, Nabû, Ištar, Ašur, Gula.

Bêl, Nabû.

Ašur, Sin, Šamaš, Bêl, Nabû.

Ašur, Šamaš, Bêl, Nabû.

It is worthy of note that in the earliest Assyrian contracts no maledictions were invoked; that the king was invoked

sometimes as well as the deities; and that few stereotyped phrases occur. Many of the tablets that have been recovered are in a poor state of preservation. Ašur is, as would be expected, the favourite deity in these maledictions.

The deities invoked in historical inscriptions of this period are:

Šamaš.

Ašur, Anu, Bêl, Ea, Ištar, the Igigi, the Anunnaki.

Ašur.

Ašur, Adad.

Ištar.

Anu, Adad.

A god *Za-*, and the gods of Martu.

Ašur, Adad.

Ašur, Adad, Ura.

Ištar.

Ašur, Ninib.

Ašur, Anu, Bêl, Ea.

Ašur, Šamaš, Rammân, and the gods.

Ašur, Sin, Šamaš, Rammân, Bêl, Nabû, Ištar of Nineveh,

Ištar of Arbela, Ninib, Nergal, Nusku.

Marduk.

Ašur, Bêlit.

The gods.

Ašur is also the favourite deity in these maledictions.

5. New Babylonian Period.

1. *Contracts.* Nbk. 125 (Kohler und Peiser, *Aus dem Bab. Rechtsleben*) is a slave contract in which Nabû and Marduk are invoked in the malediction. It was drawn up in the 21st year of Nabuchadnezzar. Nbk. 283 is an inheritance contract from the 35th year of the same reign. In the malediction Marduk and Nabû are invoked. Nabû-na'id (KB IV 214-215) is represented by a contract which contains a malediction. Anu, Bêl, and Ea are invoked to bring upon the offender the *ar-rat la nap-šu-ru ma-ar-uš-tum*. Then Nabû, IB, and Bêlit-ekalli are also invoked. The contract is sealed. Here we have the perfect malediction formula of earlier days, the great gods Anu, Bêl, and Ea being invoked. This is characteristic of this antiquarian king who made an attempt to restore the customs

of past ages. In another contract (KB IV 234-235) the curse of the great gods (*ir-rit ilâni rabûti*) is written; and in still another (KB IV 246-247) Marduk and Zarpanitum are invoked.

2. *Historical Inscriptions.* In an inscription of the time of Nabopolassar (Langdon, *Die Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, pp. 66 ff.) there is an expression of a malediction. It is: *ši-te'-e-ma li-na-ru ga-ri-ka*, "may they overthrow thy enemies". The deities invoked are Nabû and Marduk.

Nabonaid in an inscription (Langdon, *op. cit.*, pp. 218 ff.) invokes a malediction upon his enemies. This curse is embedded in a detailed blessing which the king invokes upon himself. In the malediction no specific god is named.

The deities invoked in contracts of the New Babylonian period are:

Marduk, Nabû.

Nabû, Marduk.

Anu, Bél, Ea, Nabû, IB, Bêlit-ekalli.

Great gods.

Marduk, Zarpanitum.

Only one malediction has been found in historical inscriptions of this period which contains the names of invoked deities. The deities are: Nabû and Marduk. In these historical inscriptions numerous blessings are found where maledictions would be expected. The favourite gods, as one would expect, are Nabû and Marduk.

6. Persian Period.

In the seventh year of the reign of Cyrus (KB IV 278-279) there was drawn up an interesting will. In the contract it is stated that whosoever contests the will Anu, Bél, and Ea will curse him with an indissoluble malediction, and Nabû will deprive him of future days. The formula is: *ar-ra-as-su mar-ru-uš-tu li-i-ru-ur*. It is sealed before witnesses.

The historical inscriptions of this period contain no maledictions but many blessings. It seems that the benediction has gradually taken the place of the curse. This fact would prove very suggestive in a study of the development of the social moral consciousness in Babylonian and Assyrian culture.

II. General Nature of the Malediction in Cuneiform Inscriptions.

The malediction as found in Cuneiform inscriptions seems to have been employed as a means of praying down evil upon a person. There were two main classes, direct and conditional. A direct malediction was pronounced after the forbidden deed had been done, *e. g.* *Ištar it-ta-di a-ru-ru-ta*, "Ištar pronounced a malediction" (Gilg. Epos VI, 175). A conditional malediction is one which is invoked and will take effect if the forbidden deed be done, *e. g.* "in future time if this tablet be destroyed then may the great gods wrathfully curse (*ag-giš li-ru-ru-šu*) him (the destroyer)" (Kudurru of Nebuchadrezzar I).

Some maledictions were considered more powerful than others. There were some which belonged to a class known as the "indissoluble malediction". This designation occurs again and again under such forms as: *ar-rat la pa-ša-ri*, *ar-rat la nap-šu-ri*. A malediction of similar significance occurs under the following forms: *ir-ri-ta ma-ru-uš-ta*; *iz-ra rab-a*. The oft recurring words *enim enim nam-šub nun-ki-ga ú-me-ni-šig*, "the words of the malediction of Eridu utter" refer to a standard formula of magic curse. We do not know what the words of this formula were.

The most frequent source or cause of maledictions is found in the endeavour of kings to have their name and fame well preserved throughout the ages, and whoever failed to do what-ever was calculated to bring that about was made the object of a malediction. Not only the king's own name, but also that of his father and grandfather must be preserved (V R 10, 116-120, Ašurbanipal, Rassam-Cylinder). Moreover, the king's record must be placed in a conspicuous location, and published, so that all may be able to read of his renown. The kings thus provided for the punishment of sins of omission as well as of those of commission. Whoever seized the property of another, and tried to claim ownership; or whoever disturbed the grave of a king; or removed a boundary-stone (I R 70 Col. II 8-9; cf. Deut. 27 17) was cursed. A malediction may come upon a man not only because of his own sins, but also because of those of his parents¹. In short, the smallest offence

¹ See Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Babylonischen Religion*, *Šurpu*, V-VI, l. 43 etc., where *ar-rat* means the sin which is the result

could cause a malediction, *e. g.* offence against the protective god of the family; against honor, the city etc.

Of course, anyone could be the object of a malediction, and even deities were sometimes cursed, but naturally this was poetically conceived, *e. g.* *ilu Bêl i-zi-ir-an-ni-ma*, "Bêl has cursed Me (Ea)" (IV R 43 Col. I 36, Deluge). Inanimate objects were also cursed, as we learn from KB VI, *Weltsch.*, Tafel III, l. 19, where the day is cursed (compare Radau, *Ninib the Determiner of Fates*, p. 23, where stones are cursed).

As in the case of the oath so here the greater the gods invoked, or the more solemn the occasion, the greater the banning power of the malediction.

When a curse was pronounced it often comprised in its malediction the whole activity of a man's life. His every work and interest were placed under a ban. Not only the man himself but also his seed was doomed to destruction (Compare the Hebrew curse in Deut. 27, 17, Ps. 109, etc.). As each deity seems to have had a special work to do when pronouncing a malediction—even the minor deities—the contents of a curse were very various and extensive. Like the ban, a malediction always brought misfortune upon its object; yet it acted as the strongest possible protection—as a taboo. This is seen very clearly in those cases where it took the place of an oath serving as a protection against violation.

III. General Ritual of the Malediction in Cuneiform Inscriptions.

Any one presumably could invoke a malediction, but the king appears, as far as our literature goes, to have been the most frequent invoker. Further, any divine being whether god or demon could be invoked, and the "seven" which were so active in Babylonian and Assyrian times may have been an expression indicative of all the gods or demons. All the great gods whose names are mentioned in heaven and earth (*ilâni rabûti ma-la i-na šamê u eršiti šum-šu-nu zak-ru*) may be invoked. The greater the god the oftener he was likely to have been invoked. Once or twice the king was invoked. This was due to the tendency to deify him. In poetry such beings as

of a malediction. Compare the Hebrew doctrine implied in Jer. 31, 29 and Ezekiel 18, 2.



Tiāmat (KB VI, *Weltsch.* III 73) and Gilgameš (Gilg. Epos VI 84) could pronounce a malediction. When inscribing a tablet, the names of the deities invoked were placed on record with the inscription. These, then, acted as the special gods who would curse the transgressors. Such deities, even when their names were unknown, acted as protective gods.

A malediction could presumably be pronounced anywhere, although, of course, it is reasonable to suppose that special occasions might call for special ritual in this respect. On one occasion it is said that Ištar went upon the wall of Erech and pronounced a malediction (Gilg. Epos VI 174-175). This is, of course, poetical; but it is an indication of use.

It is difficult to say whether one time was considered more favourable than another for the pronunciation of a malediction. Such expressions as *ûmî a-ru-ur-ti*, "the day of malediction"; *û-um su-gi-i u ar-ra-ti*, "the day of want and malediction" occur often, but no definite conclusions can be drawn from them. However, it seems that certain times were unfavourable for such purposes, e. g. the 7th 14th 19th 21st and 28th of different months (IV R 32-33, *Hemerology*).

As far as we know, few physical acts were performed at the pronunciation of a malediction. But since maledictions seem to be so bound up with oaths, often being substitutes for them, and oaths were taken by raising the hand, it seems likely that the same gesture¹ was also used at the pronunciation of a malediction. However, the attitude assumed at the pronunciation of a malediction was probably like that of the seven devils on the bas-relief (Frank, *Babyl. Beschwörungsreliefs*, Tafel IV G, LSS, III 3. But it is also possible that the seven devils have in one hand a stone to throw). It seems certain, however, that the spoken word was the commonest form. Poetically speaking, the god pronouncing the malediction may change his outward visible form as Ninib did (Hrozný, *Mythen von dem Gotte Ninrag*, MVAG 1905, 5. pp. 24f.). But it is not at all sure that this metamorphosis was made as a ritual preparation for the pronouncing of the malediction.

A ban is similar to, and interchangeable with, a malediction. *Mamîtu* is often translated ban and so is *nîš*. This is further

¹ Compare , to make a sign with the hand, with which *mamîtu* is related, and whose derivative  means misfortune or malediction.

proved by the use of the word *arâru* which means (1) to ban, and (2) to curse. But every ban is not necessarily a malediction, because the ban is usually the work of the witch, charmer, or demon who secures control over divine influences by properly uttering the ban and by magic symbolism; while the malediction is the work of a divine person. The evil-spirits, demons, charmers, and witches ban one chiefly through the instrumentality of the "evil glance", the "evil tongue", the "evil mouth", or more often the "evil word", together with certain magical acts such as the use of a picture made of different kinds of material. The gods *curse* when called upon to do so, but also *ban* the evil-spirits who have enchanted mankind, e. g. *kiš-pi ik-šip-an-ni ki-šip-šu*, "by the charm by which he has charmed me, charm thou (Nusku) him" (Tallqvist, *Maqlu* I Obv. 126). Gilgameš is called the *bêl ma-mi-ti-ku-nu*, "lord of the ban", i. e. the master of the enchantment which enchants a person, and he can dispel it by pronouncing a ban upon the evil-spirit who holds the person in its power. A ban produces a malediction, and a malediction produces a ban (cf. the phrase *ar-rat u-šur-ta*, "the curse of a ban")—especially if the ban has been the result of one's own sinfulness. To be under the influence of a ban was considered a bad thing, for we find it often coupled with other afflictions. Hence, one sought always to be rid of the ban; and since most bans acted at the same time as maledictions and were often identical with them, we can assume that the same ritual was used in removing a malediction as in the case of the removal of a ban. In fact, in the loosing of a ban the malediction which it produced was removed, and *vice versa*. Hence, I shall proceed to describe the main features of the ritual used in the removal of a ban as being the same as those used in the removal of a malediction.

The ceremony in the loosing of a malediction was sometimes very simple, but oftener very elaborate. In some cases, merely the pronounciation of a set formula was sufficient to drive away the evil-spirits. Such a formula was: "in the name of heaven be exorcised, in the name of earth be exorcised", etc. In other cases, besides the formula, certain specific acts were necessary. For example; Marduk's attention is attracted by a man suffering under a malediction. He goes to his father Ea and says: *a-bi ar-rat limut-tim Kîma gal-li-e ana amêli*

it-taš-kan, "my father an evil malediction like a demon has befallen a man". After relating the whole story of the man's affliction he succeeds in being sent by Ea to loose the sufferer. He goes and takes the enchanted man and explains his enchantment. Then he pronounces the destruction of the ban. The man is free from his malediction, and in turn the sorcerer is banned.

There are some other methods even simpler: a man may be loosed after having prayed in a prescribed way, *e. g.* by lifting up the hands in prayer and invoking the great gods. King gives a good example of this in his translation of No. 12 l. 78b-79 of his *Bab. Magic and Sorcery*: *lip-šu-ru ni-šu ma-mit ni-iš kâti zikir ilâni rabûti*, "from the ban, the malediction, may the lifting up of my hand, the invocation of the great gods, give release".

From the cylinder seals we can easily tell the attitude a man must assume when led before the deity. He stands with both hands raised—sometimes with only one, the other being taken by the priest who leads him. Then come the invocation, confession, and prayers, recited partly by the priest and partly by the man. Offerings are then made, magical rites, such as the presentation of small images, the knotting and unknotting of colored threads, throwing into a fire certain substances, dropping certain substances into oil, and pouring libation. Very often the exact position of the priest was required. He must stand facing the east, west, or the evening star, according to the time of day. A specific place was often prescribed, *e. g.*, on the river bank in the house of ablution. The priest who stood in the service of the gods wielded the same power against the evil-spirits as the evil-spirits wielded against the sick. He wore vestments special to the occasion, changing them at certain points in the service. He recited the *Šiptu, ki-ma šame-e li-lil ki-ma irši-tim li-bi-ib ki-ma ki-rib šame-e lim-mir*, "like heaven may he be bright, like earth may he be clean, like the middle of heaven may he be pure", or exorcising formula, in technical language, which was the weightiest weapon he could wield against the evil-spirit. This he did usually in a whisper in the presence of an image of wax, or with mutterings or singing. Accompanying the ceremony was the burning of torches. Liquids and incense played a prominent part, especially water. Washing especially with pure and clean

water—sometimes with oil of different kinds—played a prominent rôle in the ritual. Unwashed hands always denoted ritual uncleanness. A man usually washed his hands over a bowl with images of the witches in it. The water could also be drunk as a remedy, but in every case it must be absolutely pure and clean.

Then, there often took place the symbolical burning of the evil-spirit or witch which was supposed to hold the man under ban or malediction. The picture of the witch (which may or may not be known) played the chief part. Here the common magical element of fire came in. Sometimes the images were made of burnable material, such as, wood, pitch, clay, wax, etc. Then came the symbolical casting of certain things in fire, such as, tamarisk-wood, *muštakal*-plant, cane, etc.

It was customary sometimes for the priest to repeat the ceremonies, which the witch had performed and thus, by the law of opposites, succeeded in driving the evil-spirit away (cf. Maqlu II 148-168). Perhaps the most usual proceeding in loosing a malediction was the following: the priest goes into the presence of the sick man before the great gods, the lords of loosing, asks a series of questions about what the sick man might have done to deserve the malediction, reciting a long list of sins which might have caused it in order to locate as definitely as possible the sufferer's sin. Then, with the sick man, he recited a litany, touching the sick man and calling upon the different gods. Finally, the loosing benediction is pronounced, "go and never return". The ban passes on to the evil-spirit leaving the sick man whole.

And now let us indicate as briefly as possible the two chief modes of loosing the malediction, *i. e.*, the simple and the elaborate. Of course the degree of simplicity and elaborateness varied. It may be said that the simple mode is that used in the case of an ordinary person. It consisted merely in the recitation of an incantation. Examples can be found in Zimern, *Šurpu*, V-VI. On the other hand, very elaborate ceremonies prevailed, for example, in the loosing of a king from his malediction. Let us briefly indicate one example: The king comes and has something placed on his head. A formula is recited and atonement is made. The exorciser puts on a dark garment and causes seven altars to be set up. Upon these altars he places dates, bread, honey, oil, etc. Then seven

incense vessels and seven vessels of wine are prepared, a lamb is killed and an offering is made. After many other points of ritual, the exorciser stands behind the preparations which he has made, being careful to stand with his face towards them, and recites the incantation. A preparation of honey and butter is cast to the four winds, gifts are brought out to the gates, the offering is completed, and prayers are directed to the "seven gods" for the king's forgiveness. Up to this point only the priest has been active. Now the king takes part for the first time. He takes up his position on an elevated place and prays that his sins be forgiven. He then pours intoxicating liquid into a special vessel and prays for continuance of life; and into another he makes libation and prays for purity. He then washes in pure water and puts on a clean robe. The exorciser again takes up his part, by going to the palace gate and making an offering of a sheep, and sprinkling the door-posts with its blood. Then follows a special piece of ritual. The exorciser goes to a field and causes a bath-house for the gods to be built, near which are set up the standards of the king. Three offerings are made. Then censers are prepared and supplied with cypress for twenty-three gods and different incantations are said, each three times. Then follow different atonement ceremonies before different gods, and several minor points of ritual, and the exorciser waits for the setting of the sun. The king again takes part. After sun-set he washes himself in water, puts on a clean ritual garment and sits in the bath-house. The priest then kindles all the censers which he has placed before the king; prepares the wood and offers the sacrificial lamb. Then he brings the three kinds of meat with cypress, milk, wine, and different gifts. Finally, he makes another atonement for the king who repeats the prescribed incantation, and the evil-spirits depart (compare Zimmern, *Ritual-tafeln*).

The official looser of a malediction was the priest—usually the *Ašipu* priest (see Zimmern, *op. cit.*, *Ašipu*)—acting through the power and under the direction of the gods. Special gods were usually invoked. The most usual were the so-called light-gods, the patrons of the exorciser and magician. These were Ea, Šamaš, Gibil, Nusku, Ištar, etc. Nusku under the name Gibil (written Bil-Gi or Giš-Bar) *i. e.* the fire-god, was often invoked especially in hymns. The greater the god the

more certain was the removal of the curse, and hence Ea, the inventor of all "the useful arts, and especially of magic, the master of wisdom" (or his envoys) was oftenest invoked. Marduk was so popular as the lord of magic and exorcism, that incantation itself became especially identified with his name, *e. g.*, *šip-tum ši-pat ilu Marduk a-ši-pu ša-lam ilu Marduk*, "incantation is the incantation of Marduk, exorcism is the image of Marduk" (Zimmern, *op. cit.*, No. 54). Yet, by the power of any god, through the priest, one could be loosed from his malediction, because the usual formula, *niš ilâni rabûti lû tamâta*, "in the name of the great gods be thou exorcised", is merely a stereotyped expression for all the gods, great and small, known and unknown. Thus, the priest, through the gods, with the accessories of natural assistance such as "the storm of the south, north, east, and west, the four winds"; or of suitable seasons, such as the "feast of departed souls, gift-day, unlucky-day", etc., could always loose the malediction.

After the evil-spirits were driven forth, means were devised to keep them away. Herbs were prepared as an antidote against them, either before or after they had really gone. Probably also the sign of the cross was used¹. However, talismans were frequently used. They had usually an inscription, *e. g.*, *parak Ašur u Melam eli bîti an-ni-i*, "may the shrine of the gods Ašur and Melam be over this house" (King, New Fragment of the Dibbarra-legend-ZA XI, 1896, p. 52). Defence against evil-spirits was made by recourse to objects supposed to contain some holy power, *e. g.*, a ring, amulet, image, plant, "white-wool" spun into threads, "black-wool", etc. Holy objects were often stationed at the outer-gate of the house of the cursed man to prevent evil-spirits from ever entering again. Sometimes an image of the sick man (or parts of the sick man's body) was made and various ceremonies performed with it. Blood was used in a similar way as by the Hebrews, as a defence against evil-spirits (see Zimmern, *op. cit.*, No. 26, l. 19-21). It was thought that the malediction could be diverted by different spirits if invoked. Such were considered protective deities and were very numerous.

¹ Compare Hommel, *Grundriß*, p. 100, Anm. 1. For the cross as a sign-mark and a symbol of the enemy-god in inscriptions, see Hilprecht, *BE*, II pl. 59, No. 129, and in other places. See also Jeremias, *ATAO*, 1. Aufl., p. 356.

In the above study an attempt has been made to record every instance of an actually pronounced malediction found in Cuneiform inscriptions. Our study of the ritual of the malediction, however, has taken into consideration not only the actually pronounced maledictions but likewise the many references to maledictions found in magical and poetical literature. These references, while not indicating actually pronounced maledictions, nevertheless throw much light upon the conceptions associated with the idea of malediction and with the manner in which a malediction could be properly pronounced or averted.

In conclusion, it may be remarked that the malediction in Babylonian and Assyrian times was a highly developed legal and religious ceremony, universally practiced and respected. It not only figured in ceremonies of great occasions, but also penetrated into the everyday life of the people. It seemed to have served almost the same purpose as Common Law does among modern people, for it acted as a restraint, corrective, and stimulant to better deeds. It illustrates the force which religion, even when it is merely magical, can exercise upon the human mind.